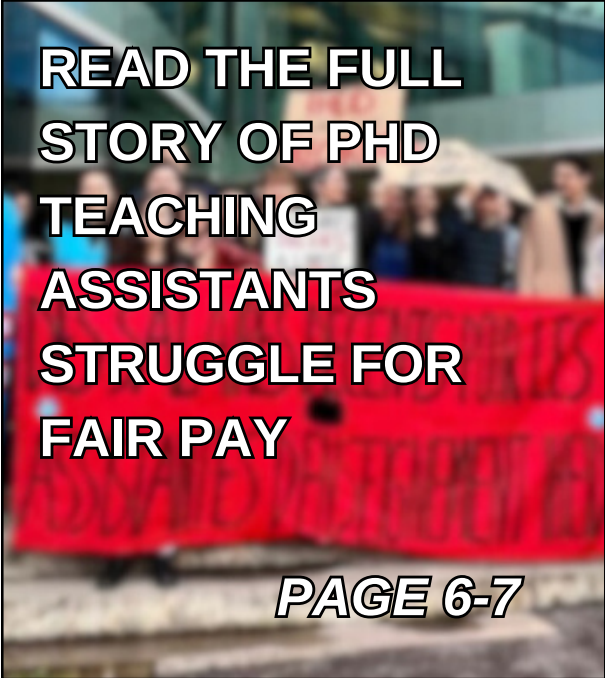


# THE GRADUATE PRESS

September 2023 - 5th Anniversary Edition - Geneva Graduate Institute, IHEID



**READ THE FULL  
STORY OF PHD  
TEACHING  
ASSISTANTS  
STRUGGLE FOR  
FAIR PAY**

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**CAN DIRECTION  
AND STUDENTS  
COME TOGETHER?**

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## MAISON DE

## L'INACCESSIBILITÉ

Imagine being unable to:

- Use the toilets
- Find a table in the library
- Move through a hallway
- Attend classes

Imagine being unable to study at the university of your choice.

Students appeal for better physical disability access on campus

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**READ THE THIRD WAVE GUIDE TO  
GENEVA'S BEST COFFEE HOUSES**

## The Graduate Press Staff 2022 - 2023

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Thank you to all the writers, both  
current and former students,  
featured in this special  
5th Anniversary Print Edition.

## A Letter from the Project Manager

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up this copy of The Graduate Press' 5th Anniversary Print Edition!

In this special print edition, we are excited to present to you a series of stories from the last five years at the Geneva Graduate Institute and around the world.

This print edition features stories from social movements, pieces from students representing backgrounds from all over the world, and initiatives like Black Conversations, which illuminate the perspectives of marginalized students. Despite the Institute's upcoming 100th anniversary, articles from the Stop Silencing Students Movement and the IHEID Assistants' Association (ADA) highlight how the Graduate Institute has room to improve in its next 100 years. This print edition showcases the diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences shared by Institute students past and present.

Since its inception in 2018, The Graduate Press has been a platform for independent student journalism and has sought to amplify the voices of students at the Institute. Journalism has the power to connect community members with shared experiences and extend a learning opportunity to those who are unfamiliar. The articles featured in this print edition were written by current and former IHEID students who each have their own individual and unique stories to share with the Institute community and the world at large.

For our new members of the IHEID community, we welcome you to this extraordinary community with stories that will get you up to speed on life at the Institute. For our community of alumni, family, and friends, we hope this print edition will allow you to look back at stories from the last five years at the Institute with fresh eyes. Most of all, we hope to start the fall 2023 semester with a set of stories that will captivate and inspire IHEID students to write and share more with those around them.

To all of our Graduate Press staff and contributors from 2018 to 2023, thank you for your work, effort, and willingness to share your perspectives. These stories hold a place in IHEID history and provide a snapshot of life at the Institute over the last five years.

Happy reading!

Ellie Winslow

The Graduate Press Project Manager

## How do I join the Graduate Press?

The Graduate Press is always on the lookout to amplify new voices from the IHEID community.

IHEID students, faculty, exchange students, alumni, and students of programs connected to IHEID are all welcome to submit articles to TGP. If you have an opinion piece, feature article, poetry, stories, photo galleries, artworks, or anything else you want to publish on our platform, feel free to send them to us, and support TGP at the Institute.

Written submissions should aim to be 500 to 800 words and can be written in either English or French. If you wish to submit an article beyond this guide please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss your piece further. For photo essays, artworks, and videos, please include a brief explanation of your work.

All submissions can be sent to TGP via email at: [gisa.thegraduate@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:gisa.thegraduate@graduateinstitute.ch).

You can join the TGP Writer's Pool WhatsApp group by following the QR code on this page. This is a space for TGP Editors and writers to connect, share ideas, and host a creative community on campus.

To find out more about the latest TGP articles and events follow our Instagram page at [@thegraduatepress](https://www.instagram.com/thegraduatepress).



Join the TGP WhatsApp group here!

## Maison de l'Inaccessibilité

**By Cara Au, Emna Ines Fayala, and Rachel Lauder - original shared on June 26, 2023**

Imagine being unable to use the toilets without asking for help because the heavy doors are not manageable to open in a wheelchair. Imagine struggling to find a table in the library because the first floor is inaccessible, with only stairs and no public elevator. Imagine being unable to move through a hallway on your own because the ramps are too steep. Imagine missing classes and falling behind because you cannot leave your room due to a medical condition and no recording is available. Imagine being unable to study at the university of your choice because that Institute does not accommodate you.

These seemingly hypothetical scenarios are the daily reality of many students, staff, and visitors at Maison de la Paix, whether they are people with visible or invisible disabilities. Unfortunately, these experiences are often overlooked and dismissed. This article aims to bring to light the numerous physical barriers that directly impact many people at IHEID and what steps can be taken to adequately address these concerns.

### What are some of the main issues?

Those who study at or visit IHEID may notice an abundance of stairs. Stairs lead to the library, up to the Fab, and in the auditoriums. The architects of Maison de la Paix overlooked the barriers this creates for individuals with mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, walkers, or ergonomic equipment, preventing them from moving between floors with ease. As a result, individuals with disabilities must take the one small elevator available per building to get anywhere that is not on the main floor. In addition, these elevators are constantly congested and slow. This is, of course, until said elevators are out of use for over a week—an issue not communicated to students ahead of time, which would allow them to figure out alternative ways to move between floors. Stairs in the auditoriums, particularly A1A and A1B, also limit where people can sit, which is often far from their peers in a back corner. Likewise, IHEID restricts itself to what experts it can invite to conferences due to the unnecessary stairs leading up to the podiums in these rooms. If Maison de la Paix had been designed in a more accessible-friendly manner, more appropriate ramps and elevators would have been included to ensure everyone could move freely.

The hurdles do not stop at the stairs, as people also come face-to-face with heavy doors between hallways. These doors are not accompanied by automatic buttons, preventing people with mobility limitations from opening them. In addition, the high placement of card sensors creates barriers for people in wheelchairs to enter during off-hours. Moreover, the few accessible toilets available lack automatic buttons to open their hefty doors. Consequently, students, staff, and visitors are presented with a difficult ultimatum: go the entire day without using the toilet or risk being trapped inside if one even manages to enter in the first place. Alternatively, they may ask someone to assist them, but autonomy and dignity are human rights, and one should not have to rely on the help of others for a basic and intimate everyday action.

When one finally manages to reach their destination, such as their classroom, within Maison de la Paix,

the layout of these spaces immediately raises red flags. Several of the classrooms at IHEID are arranged in a manner that is inhospitable to students with physical accessibility-related needs. For instance, round tables in classrooms like S8 and S12 are positioned in a way that leaves a large empty space in the middle, while the chairs that surround them are cramped between the tables and the walls. Therefore, individuals with mobility aids may struggle to manoeuvre in the room, especially if seats next to the doors are taken. Similarly, although the Fab seeks to offer a calming environment, the layout does not offer sufficient space to accommodate physical aids without moving several chairs and tables.

### What is currently being done?

IHEID is aware of these challenges. The Student Wellbeing & Support Team works directly with students with visible and invisible disabilities regarding individual accommodation requirements (contact them at [wellbeing-support@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:wellbeing-support@graduateinstitute.ch)). While this team advocates for student-specific accommodations, it is focused on a case-by-case approach rather than large-scale institutional changes. In 2022, a disability taskforce was established as part of the Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative to improve inclusion and accessibility at the Institute. This taskforce, led by Dr. Laurent Neury with the support of staff and students, seeks to address existing barriers at IHEID to create a study and work environment adapted to everyone's needs. In the coming months, a strategic report will be presented to IHEID leadership. While the Taskforce is driven by members who are passionate about addressing the urgency of this issue, it operates on a voluntary, participatory basis. In order for its recommendations to be implemented, they need to be made a funding priority on the agenda of the IHEID Direction.

### Calls to Action

Considering the current obstacles and limited resources of the Taskforce, it is necessary to draw attention to what everyone can do to improve inclusion and accessibility at IHEID.

To the IHEID administration, we propose the following:

In the short term,

1. Educate all personnel to have a welcoming and accommodating attitude towards students with disabilities.
2. Publish the findings of the upcoming disability taskforce report so they are available beyond internal staff to the IHEID student body.
3. Develop a voluntary, anonymous programme for students to take notes for others with learning disabilities.

In the long term,

1. Improve physical spaces at the Institute and residences to be more accessible in light of previously identified issues and the disability task force report.
2. Approach accessibility in a proactive rather than reactive manner. In addition to the already existing services to address individual student, faculty, and staff accommodation needs, create accessible spaces for everyone, including visitors.
3. Allocate significant and sustainable funding towards increasing accessibility at IHEID.

For the IHEID student body:

1. Create space for people with mobility needs on campus. If you are able, use the stairs so that they can free up elevators for those who really need them. In crowded classrooms, leave easily accessible seats close to doorways for students with mobility needs to occupy.
2. Support students with learning disabilities. Understand that we all differ in our learning styles and abilities, and some learning disabilities may not be visible or diagnosed. Volunteer to take notes for other students with or without learning disabilities.
3. Hold the administration accountable. Encourage IHEID, GISA, and student wellness initiatives to make accessibility a priority and take action.
4. Share your story. If you want to reach out to the Taskforce to discuss your experiences or get involved, contact [emna.fayala@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:emna.fayala@graduateinstitute.ch).
5. Spread awareness. Speak up if you notice accessibility issues, even if they do not affect you directly. Have conversations with friends, professors, and administration on this topic. Educate yourself and others with useful resources, including by sharing this article!

Although these calls to action will not eliminate every accessibility-related barrier at IHEID, they are important starting points.

The Maison de la Paix is a symbol of peace through its name. IHEID's academic culture promotes diversity in membership and thought, yet it struggles to ensure total inclusivity. It is not possible to embody a message of diversity, tolerance, and belonging without an accessible environment that respects the needs of all. Despite being only 10 years old, the architecture of Maison de la Paix, which concerns itself with aesthetics rather than practicality, is outdated and discriminatory. How can one of the most prestigious academic establishments in the world exclude others through its design? By not prioritising the accessibility needs of the community, it creates disillusion in its student body because so much more is expected of such a prestigious establishment. Furthermore, IHEID, despite having so much else to offer, risks driving away students and researchers who could greatly contribute to the Institute but whose accommodation needs are not met.



**The door to the accessible toilets on floor three of petal, the door is particularly heavy and does not have an automatic open button**

# 4 THE STOP SILENCING STUDENTS LEGACY

## #Stopsilencingstudents: Beginning and Developments

*By Silvia Ecclesia - original shared on December 11, 2021*

On December 7th, 2021, after the General Townhall organised by the Graduate Institute's Director, exactly at 1 pm on the Graduate Press website, a press release from a group of grassroots students was published announcing their occupation of the Maison de la Paix cafeteria starting at 2 pm of the same day until their demands are met with "meaningful action".

The decision to take this quick and important step, according to Aurélie Semunovic, one of the student organisers, stems from two specific recent incidents that "felt endemic of the administrative responses to the student body". First, posters that were part of a campaign organised by the Graduate Institute's Feminist Collective for the Day to Fight Violence Against Women had been taken down from the Institute's walls on November 29th by the University's administration. The Collective had been asked to remove the posters because of an event that was going to take place in the Maison de la Paix; however, when the Collective refused, the posters were removed by the Graduate Institute's Communications Department and put up again only after a week. The Collective never heard from them after the event for an apology or explanation. Second, on the snowy evening of December 2nd, the entire Institute's student body received an email that was mistakenly sent by the Director in which she complained about the student's dissatisfaction with the new logo, to say the least. Though the email, originally sent in French, does lose some nuance upon translation, students found the email to be endemic to the relationship between students and the administration.

The students occupying the cafeteria have three demands, which are here reported in short and can be found more extensively in their press release:

**Governance:** (1) An independent external audit of internal processes; (2) the creation of an Independent and External Reporting Mechanism.

**Labour:** Salaries of IHEID Teaching Assistants (TAs) need to represent the Geneva average TA pay, including social welfare benefits (unemployment, AVS, and pension).

**Representation:** We want student representation on each level of IHEID decision-making.

According to Aurélie, "We plan on staying here for the next two weeks if necessary, until we are heard. [...] This is representative of many students' emotions; it was easy for students to come to this event today due to the fact that the answers from the director were unsatisfactory". The protesters have attracted a lot of media attention, both from the Geneva canton and even at the Federal level. Moreover, according to them, they received a lot of silent support from those students who could not join the occupation. "We also have to remember why some people can't be here. There are people who depend on the Institute for their salaries, their houses, their education, and maybe even their visa. They do not have the chance of speaking up" (Tobias, student protester).

In addition, the #stopsilencingstudents movement has also circulated a petition for students and alumni to sign, which has collected (at the moment of writing) 255 signatures.

Nevertheless, the student body is not completely united in this venture. It has to be noted that the students who organised and are bringing forth the protest are a grassroots group that is not part of any elected body at the university. The Graduate Institute Students Association (GISA) is the elected organ with representative power, especially in the eyes of the Administration. Marie-Laure Salles, commenting to Geneva Solutions, "stressed that the 'students who are doing the sit-in are not in any way representing any of the two official associations, neither the ADA (Assistants' Association) nor the GISA.". Though GISA did decide to support the sit-in demands on the evening of December 8th after an internal vote, as stated by them, they recognise the importance of the demands presented by the protesters and "strongly advocate for the same, as we have over the years and will continue to". However, it has to be noted that, per GISA's by-laws, the support of a movement is possible even through a simple vote among the Board members, while the full endorsement of a protest can only be done through a student-wide vote. While 255 signatures in 48 hours is a historic number, a general vote among the around 1000 members of GISA has not been done, and it is therefore not possible to know with certainty what proportion of the collective supports the sit-in.

Still, as stated above, Aurélie believes that "this is representative of many students' emotions", as we also witnessed during the town hall, where more than 200 students expressed a common dissatisfaction. However, how widespread is this emotion? Some opposing voices are rising. For example, student Filippo de Gennaro commented, "I don't think it is correct to talk about collective opinion or a united student body. I have been talking about this matter with a lot of people recently, and most of them seemed sceptical and not supportive of the protest, be it for its demands or its means of implementation". As another example, a student who requested to remain anonymous stated, "I'm not sure it helps to move things forward in the end. I wonder if this is the only way out in terms of negotiations, and especially if it will be effective. Overall, I have the impression that there is a lack of understanding of each other's issues. I hope that the campus can calm down and that dialogue will triumph over the confrontation that is proposed by a minority of students. I think that lots of students, in contrast, want improvement but with another approach."

According to Aurélie, their decision to not act within institutional organisations such as GISA or the ADA stems from their perceived impossibility to "equate the level of advocacy that is needed in such an institution like ours" due to the mechanisms they have been placed under. However, the current GISA Board members do not feel like this is the case, as they have not felt deterred from working or advocating.

## Language on Campus

*By Samuel Pennifold - originally shared on April 20, 2023*

An appreciation of the significance of how language is used on academic campuses has grown increasingly important over the past few years. As society has progressed, we have become more aware of the constructive and destructive power of how we use language. In places of learning where discussion and inclusion are vital, it has become particularly important to examine our language to assure that, as a society, we can continue to progress towards inclusivity, safety, and equality. Many academic campuses have seen some of the most radical changes, yet others have been unwilling or slow to adapt to change.

On the scale of progress, the Institute appears to be somewhere in the middle. Not forging ahead and yet not remaining belligerently stuck in the past like other campuses, it seems the Institute has stagnated. The creation of a code of conduct and the 'Respect' campaign indicates that steps have been taken. Yet there are other areas where the Institute seems to be lagging in its duty to progress.

Recently, MINT students experienced this firsthand in a Global Issues and Perspectives lecture on migration, asylum courts, and the global counter-terrorism legal framework. The language used in the lecture, particularly concerning sexual violence, left many students feeling uncomfortable. Some students even left the lecture hall before the end of the lecture. This episode brings into sharp focus the importance of language and its use on academic campuses. Discussions about challenging and sensitive issues on academic campuses are vital for learning, and such issues can be dealt with and solutions can start to be found without forthright discussion. However, of equally vital and obvious importance is being sensitive to our language.

In a module as large as Global Issues and Perspectives, the hard truth is that multiple people will have experienced sexual violence in some form. The importance, then, of lecturing on and discussing sexual violence with sensitive language cannot be overstated. All voices, especially those of people who have experienced sexual violence in this instance, are vital to such discussions and should not have barriers to their inclusion placed on them through the use of insensitive language.

It is now approaching two years since the Stop Silencing Students movement swept across the Institute. This movement was a response to what students felt was an attempt by the Institute's direction to stop them from having their voices heard on issues of sexual harassment on campus, something that was only confirmed by the, albeit perhaps unintentionally, symbolic removal of posters raising awareness of sexual violence and harassment before the Institute hosted an external event. After two years, it seems the Institute has continued to stagnate in its progress in realising the importance of how we use language on campus.

On a campus as diverse as the Institute's, the importance of taking responsibility for using accurate and sensitive language in lectures, policies, and messaging is only greater. As a leader in the academic field of global policy, the Institute should rather be looking to forge ahead.

## L'Amicale des étudiantes et étudiants francophones, la langue française et le bilinguisme institutionnel à l'IHEID

By L'AMEF

L'Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement est issu de la fusion en 2008 de deux institutions, l'Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales et l'Institut universitaire d'études du développement respectivement fondés en 1927 et 1977. L'histoire de notre Institut est donc riche et celui-ci a la chance — et l'honneur — de pouvoir s'appuyer sur ce précieux legs institutionnel. Les deux composantes fondatrices de l'Institut ont de tout temps été des institutions de renom au sein desquelles le français prédominait. Avec la fusion des deux institutions et sa modernisation, l'Institut a mis sur place une politique de bilinguisme institutionnel dit « asymétrique », l'anglais étant dorénavant la principale langue de travail à l'IHEID. Néanmoins, ce bilinguisme et cette capacité de travailler tant en français qu'en anglais sont — et doivent demeurer — les marques de fabrique de notre Institut, étant à la fois un fort vecteur d'identité et d'excellence. En effet, la maîtrise, ou à tout le moins la connaissance passive du français, offre des perspectives inédites pour les étudiantes et les étudiants, tant en termes d'accès à la documentation servant à la recherche universitaire qu'à des carrières au niveau international, le français étant l'une des langues de travail de toutes les institutions multilatérales, y compris celles sises en Suisse.

Hélas, la place du français subit une érosion croissante à l'IHEID, qui offrant majoritairement des cours en français il y a quelques années, se trouve aujourd'hui dans une position inverse puisque la plupart des départements n'offrent désormais que quelques cours en français, voire un seul cours par an pour certains départements.

Dans le but de renverser la vapeur, l'Amicale des étudiantes et étudiants francophones a vu le jour en 2015. La principale mission de l'Amicale est de promouvoir l'usage et la présence de la langue française au sein de notre Institut. Ainsi, l'Amicale milite activement afin que davantage de cours de langue française comme langue étrangère soient offerts à l'IHEID, pour que les professeures et professeurs incluent des lectures — à tout le moins facultatives — dans cette langue et que davantage de cours soient offerts en langue française au sein des différents départements composant notre Institut. L'Amicale ne milite pas afin que le français redevienne prédominant à l'Institut, mais plutôt afin d'équilibrer les rapports entre ses deux langues de travail. Outre les cours, le bilinguisme doit être systématisé afin d'éviter qu'une langue ne prenne le pas sur l'autre. En effet, il est évident que de se trouver au croisement de ces deux traditions linguistiques et universitaires est un atout considérable pour notre communauté. Selon les différents sondages réalisés par l'Amicale, le fait que ces deux langues soient nos langues de travail a influencé les deux tiers des étudiants à opter pour l'IHEID dans le cadre de leurs études. Il faut de ce fait éviter de se retrouver dans une situation où l'une des deux langues compromet le statut de l'autre, comme cela a pu être le cas par le passé.

L'Amicale milite ainsi pour qu'une fourchette oscillant entre vingt et trente pour cent des cours soient offerts en français (plutôt que moins de cinq pour cent à l'heure actuelle). Elle permettrait de rendre opérationnel le principe de bilinguisme « asymétrique » porté par l'administration et mentionné dans les divers instruments juridiques liant l'Institut aux divers paliers étatiques suisses. L'Amicale souhaite également rappeler au corps étudiant et professoral qu'il est toujours possible de s'exprimer dans les deux langues dans les cours offerts à l'Institut tant à l'oral qu'à l'écrit. Cette information est importante tant pour les francophones que pour les francophiles, puisqu'une étudiante ou un étudiant maîtrisant assez la langue pour suivre un cours mais non suffisamment pour rendre un travail dans l'autre langue peut tout de même suivre un cours en langue française tout en s'exprimant au besoin en anglais et en rendant ses travaux dans cette langue.

Sur le plan des réalisations, nous souhaitons d'abord souligner que nous sommes en discussions constantes avec l'administration de l'Institut afin de leur faire part de nos suggestions et de travailler ensemble à accroître le positionnement de la langue française. De manière plus concrète, l'Amicale organise un programme de tandem depuis quelques années afin de former des paires formées d'un francophone et d'un non-francophone, leur permettant d'apprendre ou de perfectionner la langue de leur partenaire d'échange. Des centaines de paires ont été formées depuis les débuts de ce programme et pour l'année 2022-2023, 116 étudiants se sont inscrits au programme, et plus de 60 personnes ont participé aux ateliers de discussions organisés par l'Amicale.

Nous organisons également plusieurs fois par an des apéros ou des activités à vocation culturelle (visites, projections de films, randonnées, etc.) afin d'échanger en français dans un cadre festif. Nous souhaitons évidemment rappeler que toutes et tous sont bienvenus même lorsqu'ayant un niveau débutant en français. Depuis sa mise sur pied, le comité AMEF et les étudiantes et étudiants y participant proviennent de tous les continents, Afrique, Amériques, Asie, Europe et Océanie et une grande part de nos membres n'ont pas le français comme langue maternelle. Nous estimons à juste titre que notre diversité est notre force, et qu'il convient de continuer à travailler en ce sens, afin que toutes et tous se sentent parties prenantes.

**L'Amicale dispose d'un groupe WhatsApp (voir le code QR ci-joint) et il est possible de nous contacter via [gisa.amef@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:gisa.amef@graduateinstitute.ch) afin de vous impliquer, de vous informer des activités organisées par l'Amicale, ou encore pour nous informer d'une situation dans laquelle vous estimez que vos droits linguistiques ont été brimés afin que nous puissions vous aider à dénouer la situation.**

## Mon français est à mon image.

By Laura Mauricio - original shared March 21, 2022, the full version of this article can be found online

En y réfléchissant, je réalise que ma relation à la langue française n'est simplement qu'un autre prisme par lequel faire sens de ma vie. La langue française, je l'ai aimée et détestée. De son côté, elle m'a peut-être aimée mais je crois surtout qu'elle a détesté ma grammaire. En réalité, ce lien conflictuel vient du fait que la langue française m'a trahie. Je la croyais vendue à ceux qui savaient la manier. J'enviais ceux qui maîtrisaient ses mélodies et ses mots dits « compliqués ». Pendant longtemps je fus incapable de la voir inclure, je ne la voyais qu'exclure. Quand, sur les bancs d'école, j'étais incapable de saisir toute l'étendue de son vocabulaire et de sa grammaire, j'avais le sentiment que le monde ne pourrait jamais être à moi. Qui confierait le monde à ceux qui ne savent pas manier la langue française ? Au fil des ans, le français allait devenir ma faille.

Cela s'est traduit par le sentiment que je ne pourrais jamais écrire un livre ou devenir journaliste. Car, pour écrire une langue, il fallait aussi savoir résumer, se concentrer, et il fallait lire. Je n'ai jamais été très douée pour résumer et je n'ai jamais vraiment trop lu. Mais je ne pouvais m'empêcher de penser que j'adorais les mots, leur son, leur forme, leur résonance au-delà de leur sens. J'aimais écrire comme je le voulais, de manière légère mais surtout très fautive. Toutefois, la peur de me voir démasquer dans mon incompetence me poussa à arrêter d'écrire. Écrire devint un facteur d'anxiété, signe d'un manque de confiance. Si bien que quand, récemment, j'ai retrouvé l'envie d'écrire, j'ai redécouvert ce qu'était vraiment pour moi la langue française.

Je réfléchis, j'associe et j'imagine en français. Je suis un être qui parle le français par un hasard migratoire, mais c'est cette langue qui fait de moi qui je suis. Mon français est à mon image. Il est grammaticalement bancal, déconcentré, étymologiquement multiple et il ne sait pas vraiment où il va. Bien que la langue française porte en elle une histoire discriminatoire et violente, qu'elle soit un héritage d'une élite dominante, j'ai réalisé que rien ne m'empêchait de continuer à cultiver l'amour de cette langue. Pour être totalement franche, je n'ai fait qu'appliquer ce que je savais déjà : le meilleur moyen de s'affranchir d'une structure de pouvoir est de se réapproprier les symboles et les normes qui nous discriminent. Alors parlez haut et fort cette langue qui vous fait. Elle ne sera jamais fautive mais vôtre.



## The Graduate Institute: Academic excellence, and precarious labour practices

*By the Association des Assistant-e-s, on behalf of Teaching Assistants*

If you have a question about a course, who do you reach out to? If you want to check your essay outline, who do you reach out to? If you want to get feedback on your paper, who has read it? The answer to these questions will often be your Teaching Assistant (TA). Although it is a job that many of us thoroughly enjoy, it comes with a bitter aftertaste when realising that TAs at the Institute are the worst paid in all of Switzerland. Besides directly impacting the quality of your education, the current contract, implemented a number of years ago now, has one further effect: contrary to the Institute's vision of equity and diversity, TAs are kept in a position of precarity; furthermore, these effects are unequally distributed depending on nationality, gender, socio-economic background, age, and discipline.

TAs, represented by the Association des Assistant-e-s (ADA) and the Syndicat Interprofessionnel des Travailleuses et Travailleurs (SIT), have been pushing for better contractual conditions since 2020. But thus far, no credible steps have been taken by IHEID towards proposing, let alone enacting, a positive solution. As a result, we, the ADA, with the support of SIT, have now started a petition to our employers and the Grand Conseil of the State of Geneva asking for substantive improvements to TAs' contractual conditions.

This saga began many years ago, when TAs had a part-time contract of around 3,000 CHF per month. Adjusting to the broader Swiss trend of including time devoted to PhD research in the contract, this was raised to 100% in 2016. But simultaneously, the Institute removed a large part of our salary and reassigned it rather as a scholarship fund, for which the Institute does not pay any social contributions. As a result, the total net remuneration for TAs was lower than the full-time minimum wage introduced in Geneva in 2020. This move was noted by the Swiss Accreditation Council (SAA), the governmental body that accredits universities, which in response recommended the improvement of TAs contractual conditions.

Despite SAA recommendations and the ADA's and TAs' efforts, in June 2022, the Direction decided to reduce the activity rate of TA contracts for the next academic year from 100% to 45%. This was because it was said that our PhD research is considered a 'personal passion project', outside of our university post. One of the many direct consequences of this decision has been that those with children have lost access to state-sponsored childcare as they fall below the minimum required activity level.

The approach of the Institute is unique in Switzerland and within the Institute itself. Research Assistants (RAs) at the Institute receive a 100% contract, fully remunerated through a wage. By comparison, TAs at the Institute receive roughly 3,000 CHF less than IHEID RAs and between 4,000 and 12,000 CHF less than TAs employed at the University of Geneva, excluding the value of social contributions.

With Geneva being one of the most expensive cities in the world, housing is almost impossible to find on this salary, and TAs have indicated that they will have to postpone medical and preventive health care and, for some, put family plans on hold. These issues have disproportionately affected those with physical or mental health needs, women, and young parents.

But all these issues could be addressed by dedicating less than 1% of the Institute's budget to TAs. After years of rejection by the Direction, TA representatives sought to start negotiating for better employment conditions in 2022. The first meeting was planned for November 8th but was cancelled by the Direction less than an hour in advance. Consequently, TA representatives reached out to the Foundation Board and the Departement de l'Instruction Publique (DIP), and a press conference was organised. The Direction did not offer any alternative meeting dates to negotiate, and TA representatives filed a request for a conciliation meeting at the Chambre des Relations Collectives de Travail (CRCT). Thanks to this process, the direction was forced to hold a minimum of three negotiation meetings in February and March to address the TAs' four main demands. These are:

1. ***The replacement of the distinction within the remuneration between the scholarship and the wage by a single salary in order to obtain adequate access to housing and full social protection***
2. ***The increase in net pay to improve the precarious living conditions of TAs***
3. ***The increase in the activity rate is necessary in order to ensure full social protection, to reflect the reality of assistants' work at the Institute and in comparable institutions, and to not create inequalities between TAs and RAs at the Institute***
4. ***The reconversion of the newly created and more precarious "ARP tutor" contracts into TA contracts***

However, the Direction continues to refuse to meet any of the TAs' demands or share any information on the allocation of the Institute's partially public budget.

Given the lack of progress, in October we will be delivering a petition to the Institute and to the Grand Conseil of Geneva. If you have not done so already and wish to support us on our mission to lift TAs out of this position of precarity, please sign our petition in person by reaching out to ADA via email at [ada.president@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:ada.president@graduateinstitute.ch) and share it with your friends and colleagues who study at the Institute or any other higher education institution in the Geneva Canton. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us for any questions or doubts, or in case you want to get involved.

## How Did We Get Here? A Timeline

**2016:** The previous Director, Prof. Burrin introduces the 2016-2022 contract for TAs, promising an increase in net remuneration thanks to a decrease in social protection costs through the splitting of the remuneration in wage and scholarship. ADA and GISA already mobilise to express concern. It is noted in following years, that the workload for TAs increases substantially, with a peak also due to the pandemic.



**Fall 2020:** The new minimum wage law is passed in the canton of Geneva. The ADA Board starts a conversation with HR and Direction to ensure the implementation of the law for RAs and TAs at the Graduate Institute.



**Fall 2021:** A poster campaign denouncing the poor remuneration of TAs at the Institute and the effects of such remuneration goes viral.



**17th and 25th January 2022:** ADA representatives meet with the Direction and with HR staff to address the issues raised during the town hall. No clear answer or room for discussion is given and it is announced that TAs will be asked to individually accept or reject the new contract from the 1st of March 2022 and that the new contract will be enforced for everyone from the 1st of September 2022. On the 17th January, 70% of TAs vote for ADA to keep pushing for entering into negotiations.

March 2022: TAs are asked to individually accept or reject the new contract from the 1st of April 2022 as a contract amendment for April 1st-August 31st 2022. If the amendment is rejected, the new contract terms would nonetheless be enforced on the 1st of September 2022. Requests to access a copy of the new contract before signing it are systematically rejected. 43 TAs accept the contract amendment as communicated by the Direction on the 4th of April.



March 2022: TAs are asked to individually accept or reject the new contract from the 1st of April 2022 as a contract amendment for April 1st-August 31st 2022. If the amendment is rejected, the new contract terms would nonetheless be enforced on the 1st of September 2022. Requests to access a copy of the new contract before signing it are systematically rejected. 43 TAs accept the contract amendment as communicated by the Direction on the 4th of April.

29th April 2022: The ADA GA with a representative from the Syndicat Interprofessionnel des Travailleurs et Travailleuses (SIT) votes unanimously to give a mandate to SIT to continue negotiations. Despite the low turnout, an overwhelming majority confirms this giving ADA the mandate to join the negotiations on the 1st of May.



10th May 2023: TA representatives organise a Day of Action, Solidarity, and Visibility for TAs from 10am to 4pm in front of Maison de la Paix. A banner is hung from the Picciotto student residence and a press conference is organised with the participation of TA representatives but also GISA Board members and delegates from Actionuni (the umbrella organisation of mid-level staff associations in Switzerland). TA representatives also hold a bake sale and picnic with large participation of assistants and students. The petition for better contractual conditions for TAs is launched and more than 200 signatures are collected in a day.



24th July 2023: TA representatives send a letter to the DIP asking for a meeting to the new Conseillère d'Etat.



TA representatives hold a banner outside MdP as part of the Day of Action, Solidarity, and Visibility for TAs



You can read more and sign the online ADA petition here

## “I wouldn’t recommend the PhD programme [at IHEID]”

By The TGP Fall 2022 Editorial Board - originally shared on November 24, 2022, a full version of this article can be found online

Teaching assistants (TAs) at the Graduate Institute suffer not just from poor pay and conditions that extract their labour at a below-market rate, but from a negative working environment that leads to depression and burnout for some TAs.

We spoke to one current PhD student who, when asked about their experience, said, “I wouldn’t recommend the PhD programme.”

TAs are vital to the running of the Institute, as was most evident during the COVID-19 pandemic as they were placed on the academic front lines of the Institute. TAs were essentially forced to work overtime for no additional compensation. When we asked TAs about their experiences, they mentioned the extra-long hours that included arduous tasks such as transcribing lectures and seminars for students with hearing impairments. This task could have been avoided, or at least reduced, if the Direction had chosen to invest in the transcribing software that is an optional part of the WebEx package. TAs will still do these tasks because they are passionate about teaching and truly care about their students; however, passion alone does not pay for TAs’ health insurance. And yet the direction has refused to acknowledge, let alone reward, these passion-driven efforts.

Since the lifting of lockdown restrictions in Switzerland, the Direction has failed to “honour the lived experience” of TAs by not improving pay and working conditions.

Being a TA is meant to provide invaluable experience to PhD students as they embark on the beginning of their professional academic journey. It is not meant to be a bizarre trial by fire. Instead of learning how to create lesson plans, grade assignments, and effectively teach students, TAs end up learning little more than how to use WebEx and Moodle.

The poor pay and conditions that TAs are subjected to have contributed to creating a negative and hostile working environment where TAs are pressed into going above and beyond the demands of their contracts or potentially facing academic retribution for being unable to meet professors’ expectations. This is especially true for TAs who have children. one TA told us they fear facing academic retribution due to their sometimes unpredictable schedules. and so would not discuss their children with professors.

The Direction has done such a good job of fracturing the student community (and the Institute community at large) to the point that many professors and students are simply unaware of the full extent to which TAs are taken advantage of. Now is the time for this to change because if pay, conditions, and the working environment for TAs do not improve, then the Institute will consequently “lose talented people” to rival universities.

## Being Provincial

*By Neva Newcombe - Originally shared June 2, 2021, the full version of this article can be found online*

One of the things that has struck me most about my peers at the Graduate Institute is how international they are. I don't mean international in the sense that multiple nationalities are represented in the same friend group or classroom, but rather that multiple nationalities are present within the same person. More often than not, "Where are you from?" is a complicated question at the Institute. The high levels of cultural exchange and international travel within the European Union are to be expected, but I've met more than a handful of students who grew up on multiple continents, travelling around with their families or independently, planting roots in many different soils. I have friends here who identify as French-Algerian, Swiss-Pakistani, Indian-Italian, and Russian-Dutch, and generally those labels only reflect their parents' passports rather than the full range of their own habitation.

As far as I can tell, people with such rich identities do not see their lives with the same awe that I do.

Until I flew to Switzerland in 2018, I lived in the same farmhouse my entire life. I didn't even leave very much. My parents run an auto repair shop together out of the large garage on our property; they are the only two employees, and the business is not exceptionally lucrative, which makes it difficult for my family to travel. As far as I can remember, the only time we left the country together was to attend my aunt's wedding in Jamaica in 1999. I was one.

So, I spent a lot of time at home with my family. I read a lot, tormented my siblings a lot, and spent most afternoons inspecting minute details of the forest that surrounded our house, taking stock of which tomatoes had turned orange, which snow piles were shrinking, and whether beavers had made any more progress on the tree by the big rock. If it was too cold for that, as it often is in Massachusetts, I would listen to records, sit by the woodstove, or spend time with my four siblings. For 21 years, that 1.5-acre plot was my whole world. Home doesn't even begin to describe it.

I know that not everyone has such a singular relationship with their home, but I did not expect to feel so provincial when I came to the Graduate Institute. I am educated after all, and I believe that I have a rich internal life. But I would not consider myself a "global citizen." Whatever that means, I know that I'm not it, and at times I've felt boring or inexperienced compared to my peers. Given the nature of our studies, sometimes I even feel unqualified to be at the Institute, as if my lived experience disqualifies me from studying international issues. The world of international affairs is populated by a certain class of people—and their children—that do have global lives. Sometimes provincial types break in, but as far as I can tell, those stories are exceptions.

.When you come from a poor family, the expectation is that you will make every effort to be more successful than your parents, to "break the cycle." Yet the more successful you become, the more alienated you become from your upbringing—your parents, your community, and your home. At this point, I've tasted so many foods that my father hasn't, seen so much art that my mother will never get to,

and heard stories that I could never, in good faith, retell. These experiences accumulate on you, like rubber bands on a rubber band ball, and eventually you find there are some places you just don't fit anymore. I don't fit at home anymore, but I'm still not cosmopolitan enough to really belong in Geneva or international society either.

Of course, we all feel a little out of place in new countries, new jobs, and new social circles; 89% of us are international students, so we are alike in our out-of-placeness. This institution and the network of international organisations it feeds into are built for a certain class of people. Well-travelled people with cosmopolitan backgrounds, to be sure, but also white people, Westerners, and those with tempered political leanings. My whiteness and westernness are what allowed me to come here, and my provinciality is what's forcing me to leave.

At the end of May, I'll leave Switzerland for good. I can't stay here, but I also can't go back to the farmhouse. So I'll try to find a third place, maybe one with other people who've grown too much but not enough, and see if I can make that feel like home.



Maison de la Paix at sunset.

## Returning From Disneyland: A Global-Southern Account of Summer Break

*By Izzeddin Araj - Originally shared October 5, 2021, the full version of this article can be found online*

Everything seemed magical: Léman Lake, the trees drying up after a rainy morning, and the mountain skyline—mesmerizing. We had just finished the last class of a long semester and had decided to celebrate. All seemed delightful and beautiful before my friend decided to do what every sociologist, according to Pierre Bourdieu, ought to do: ruin the party.

"Geneva is so clean, but where does the waste go?" he asked. None of us knew the exact answer to this unanticipated question, but we all understood very well the logic behind it. We all felt that this movie-esque scene, much like life itself here, is problematically perfect.

A few weeks later, I was preparing myself to return to Palestine. My spoilsport friend had already returned

to Indonesia. When I sent him a message to check on him, he had one more day left under quarantine. He, however, didn't seem excited about getting out. "Indonesia's COVID surge is catastrophic, brother. People are dying everywhere," he said. I didn't want to put more pressure on him, but I found myself complaining that "having stayed in Switzerland during the last year of the pandemic, we might have forgotten that it is still catastrophic in most parts of the world." "Yes, exactly", he agreed. "I was thinking about this as I now occupy a liminal space. I am still in between. Here and there. It is as if I was in Disneyland for a year and now got over its fence and saw the rest of the world, full of suffering."

Just a week later, I was crossing the Jordan River to enter the West Bank. Excited yet scared, I felt as if I finally understood what my friend meant. Ironically enough, I was holding Sarah Ahmad's Promise of Happiness when one Israeli soldier asked me, "Why would anyone leave Switzerland?"

The Disneyland metaphor seemed even more valid. I, nonetheless, didn't have much time to ponder on that, as the soldier's questions were too personal, that they created that revelatory effect, illuminating what is beyond the Disneyland fences, and that I was about to re-enter the world as colonized. I now have very conditional access to a little part of my own country.

For me, coming back from "Disneyland" is always bound to a feeling of guilt. It is an incomplete return that always lies between here and there. We return to a place where "the only stable thing is death," as one woman I interviewed told me.

.A few days before I left Palestine, another woman I interviewed told me, inspired seemingly by Nikos Kazantzakis's Zorba the Greek, "No one is fully free." Fair enough, I said to myself, remembering this when I arrived at Geneva Airport. Later that day, I passed by the same part of the lake where we all sat before I left for Palestine. It was as beautiful as usual, but more problematic this time, with a pinch of disenchantment.

## The Third Wave Guide to (some of) Geneva's Best Coffee Spots

By Samuel Smith, *Third Wave Coffee Geneva*

Geneva, a city renowned for its international organisations and stunning lakeside views, boasts another gem: its vibrant café scene. These cosy nooks serve not only as the ideal rendezvous point for friends but also as peaceful havens for some quality alone time, be it immersed in course readings or delving into your latest literary finds. In spring and summer, the cafés of Geneva offer charming terraces to soak in the sun with an iced latte, and in autumn and winter, you'll find an escape from the cold with a hot beverage in a cosy armchair. No matter the season, the sounds of people chatting and coffee machines humming, the smell of freshly roasted coffee beans and warm pastries, and the prospect of a delicious coffee and some time to chat with a friend or read never ceases to fill me with happiness and excitement.

To state the obvious, cafés have become one of my favourite parts of my time in Geneva. I've spent countless hours in my preferred spots and enjoy discovering new shops each week. As we start the new semester, it seems like the perfect time to pass on some of the (more or less) hidden gems of the Genevan café scene, along with some tips on how to get the most out of your coffee experience in Geneva.

### Coffee and Food

Although it is hard to defend the 6.80 Francs price tag for a latte at Utopia except by pointing out the 7 Francs coffee at a certain international café chain sporting a green siren logo, sometimes the high-quality, sustainable, and locally roasted coffee in a beautiful café might just be worth it. Cafés such as the aforementioned Utopia, Horace Café, or



Corde Café roast their own coffee in the shop. At Corde Café, you'll even be able to choose your preferred roast, complete with an explanation of the blend's distinct flavors. Others, such as Oh Martine! and Le Fix, source from local and sustainable coffee brands. If you're in an experimental mood, at La Bastide, you can not only get your standard lattes and flat whites but also lavender, rose, or cinnamon lattes. A personal favourite is the coffee at My Little Cup. Their baristas have won championships in the past, and they have the best iced lattes in Geneva.

Although we're mostly here for the caffeinated beverages, the cakes, pastries, scones, and avocado toasts are just as much a part of the café experience. If you're looking for a simple croissant, Les Petites Artisanes undeniably has the best there is to offer, including a twist on the classic croissant, which they call cruffins (what you'd get if you crossed a croissant with a muffin). If you're looking for scones, Pages & Sips is the place to go, and for amazing pies, go to Colette. Most cafés have some form of brunch on the weekends, but my recommendations are Barista Lab for pancakes and açai bowls, Birdie for the avocado toasts, Oh Martine! for their "tartines," and Hunch for the classic brunch experience, including bottomless mimosas. Remember, don't forget to reserve for weekend brunches, as they can fill up in no time.

### Ambiance

At even the slightest hint of sun in the sky, the terrace of a café is where I want to be, and cafés in Geneva are not lacking in great courtyards, gardens, and street-side terraces. One of the magical spots is La Bastide, which has the most beautiful courtyard in the old town. For some extra vitamin D, the terrace of Pain Quotidien at Plainpalais has sun almost all day long. Some other great terraces, in no particular order: Le Fix, Ou Bien Encore, Cottage Café, Bongo Joe, and Les Petites Artisanes. If you're looking to escape inside, relax on the cosy couches and armchairs at Boréal, browse through records at Bongo Joe, or sip your coffee while surrounded by books at Pages and Sips.

### Price

To get the biggest issue out of the way, coffee in Geneva is expensive. There are a few spots to get a latte for less than 5 Francs—for example, at Ferdinand, Les Recyclables, Bongo Joe, or Horace Café—but usually a medium latte will cost you between 5.50 and 6.50 Francs. One way of reducing the hit on your wallet is by starting your collection of "fidelity cards. These to-be-stamped cards will usually get you your eleventh coffee for free at the humble cost of inflating your wallet size as they accumulate. Another way is by asking for student discounts. My Little Cup will give you 20% off your order, and Boréal has a fidelity card for students that requires half as many coffees to receive one on the house.

### Service

Swiss people are not known to be particularly f-

riendly or warm-hearted, and I would know; I've lived here all my life. But there is something about working at a café that makes baristas defy that general rule of thumb. Across the board, baristas at any of the cafés are welcoming, kind, and friendly. And just as hard as it is to find unfriendly baristas, it is hard to make a list of cafés with the best service in town. However, some honourable mentions go to Pages & Sips with a mostly English-speaking staff, Corde Café for their enthusiastic explanations of their current blends, and Boréal for the occasional double stamp on your carte de fidélité.

### Studying

Instead of bunkering down in the library for weeks, a nice café might just be the change of scenery needed to finish that last book or paper. While some cafés unfortunately have a "no laptop" policy, such as Ferdinand or Birdie, most cafés are fine with you setting up shop as long as you're not there during peak hours on the weekends. Some great spots for studying with a lot of space are Bongo Joe, Pages and Sips (except on Saturdays), and Pain Quotidien Plainpalais. Due to their proximity to the Graduate Institute, Le Fix and My Little Cup are great alternatives to the library at Maison de la Paix. The co-working café Voisins is not surprisingly the best

adapted to spend a day studying, but personally, Boréal at Stand takes the cake, especially when you have to meet that last deadline on a Sunday evening.

Obviously, this article is not meant to provide a comprehensive list of all the cafés you must try while in Geneva. But, as I sit at Colette, sipping on my coffee with a half-eaten slice of apple pie in front of me, I hope that it nudges you in the right direction and provides you with some ideas on how to start your own café discovery journey.

You can follow my journey on Instagram @thrd.wve. And please send me your newest café discoveries!



## Where to find the cafés mentioned in this article

- Utopia** - Rue des Eaux-Vives 8
- Horace Café** - Chem. du 23-Août 3
- Corde Café** - Rue du 31 Décembre 32
- Le Fix** - Av. de France 17
- Oh Martine!** - Rte de Chêne 6
- My Little Cup** - Av. Blanc 51
- Les Petites Artisanes** - Rue Micheli-du-Crest 18
- Pages and Sips** - Grand-Rue 37
- Colette** - Rue Patru 6
- Barista Lab** - Bd de Saint-Georges 8
- Birdie** - Rue des Bains 40
- Hunch** - Quai Gustave-Ador 28
- La Bastide** - Grand-Rue 8
- Pain Quotidien** - Bd Georges-Favon 45
- Ou Bien Encore** - Rue des Bains 61
- Ferdinand** - Pl. du Bourg-de-Four 19
- Les Recyclables** - Rue de Carouge 53
- Voisins** - Bd James-Fazy 8
- Boréal** - Rue du Stand 60

## A Hectic Townhall

*By Dario De Quarti & Amédée Hirt - originally shared December 9, 2021, the full version of this article can be found online*

On December 8th, the whole Graduate Institute's community was invited to a general town hall. This meeting was officially the opportunity for the director, Professor Marie-Laure Salles, to present the Institute's strategy for the next five years and to also reveal the widely discussed new logo.

Initially planned for 12:30, the forum started with a few minutes of delay, certainly due to the more than 200 students present in a largely filled auditorium. This large attendance was, without a doubt, widely connected to the tense context of the last few weeks. Discontent was rising among the student body. The time for questions with the public was obviously eagerly awaited.

The Director began by stating she would have to leave the session at 1:30 p.m. sharply: "The proposal for a strategy has been worked on quite collectively and validated by the Conseil de Fondation, the ultimate body in terms of decision-making. The title we chose is Junction 2027", notably in reference to the wonderful spot where the Rhône and the Arve embrace each other and to the Institute's centenary in 2027.

The first point of the presentation was a SWOT analysis of the Institute. A major strength depicted was the history of the Institute and its role as a pioneer in multilateralism: our school was born with an international focus; it was not added afterwards on the side of other curricula, like in Sciences Po or other schools.

The size of the Institute was then evoked as both a strength and a weakness, allowing our institution to react faster in times where a quick response to unanticipated events is needed but also leaving the path for some external fragility as a stand-alone school, not part of any large public university. The private-public business model was classified as an opportunity, allowing for more resiliency than a fully private Anglo-Saxon model.

The main threats, apart from the still-ongoing pandemic, were on the budgetary side. Marie-Laure Salles underlined that before her arrival, the Institute was running a large 3 million CHF deficit due to the investment in online-friendly learning environments and that she had to correct this financial trajectory. The financial situation was described as being much better now.

The director underlined that in a world where public money is not going to increase but where the Institute is being asked by the public funders to have at least 1000 students, the current number of 1'100 students was a good match in terms of future projections. She added that she was hoping to make executive education a bigger source of financing for the future and that tuition would not be raised at this stage.

Three points on the operationalization of the strategy were then covered: a focus on students, on research and faculty, and on outreach. Among the key changes promised, we can mention the reforms of academic programmes (already going on), the strengthening of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, investments in new key themes such as sustainability and digitalization, more diversity in the future recruiting of teachers, and the

reinforcement of career service. Director Salles also strongly insisted on the new area, "La Fabrique de la Paix", scheduled to open in February 2022 on the fourth floor of Petal 2. Firstly put forward as an open and convivial space for students, it was then explained to be a facilitator space including labs, a media centre, and a tech centre to increase connections with partners.

Finally came the long-awaited moment: the presentation of the new logo. Needless to say, students were quite surprised to see how similar it was to the old one. Later in the town hall, a student would describe it as being "just more curvy".

The Directrice then announced the cost of the logo in a very singular way: "The total cost for this new logo development is 6% of the increase in TAs wages announced. Not to mention that this spending for the logo is one-shot, whereas the increase in TAs wages will be paid yearly". Later, following up on a more direct question, the Director finally revealed that the cost was 15,000 CHF. A later question, by GISA's administrative director, asked why 15'000 CHF were allocated to "a small change in a logo", while this money could have been allocated to GISA and initiatives, whose budget is 15 CHF per student per semester. The director answered that she also gives money directly to initiatives when they ask for it.

Moving forward, an extremely intense, to say the least, Q&A session began.

On diversity, a student who described himself as "coming from the African continent", asked what mechanisms would be put in place to attract more professors from the region. The director underlined that this was a very important part of the strategy and that Professor Degila was involved in this process. The idea of creating regional chairs was mentioned.

A student then expressed deep dissatisfaction about the new student residence: "I've been living in GM since day one. Multiple people have entered my room without authorization; we cannot cook at night; we cannot sublet our rooms at GM; and we get no answers to emails when we raise these issues." The director replied that she was taking full responsibility for this, but she could not solve these issues directly.

To sum up, a deeply rooted and severe dissatisfaction of the student body emerged, with tens of questions coming from all parts of the auditorium and several general applause to the students asking questions. This Townhall saw the outburst of an accumulation of issues faced by the students. What should have been the presentation of Junction 2027 became the embodiment of the disjunction that exists between the current direction and many students who feel they are not listened to. A student, quite symbolically, tweeted that IHEID was acting like "a corporation that does some teaching on the side". Ironically enough, this "corporation" argues that funds are limited but are still responsive to most of the students' demands. A lot of things were promised in the presentation. Will the promises made be kept? Will the funds be found? Or will the glass continue to spill? Time will tell.

## Knowledge for Profit

*By Sine Schei - originally shared December 1, 2022, the full version of this article can be found online*

The IHEID direction's response is a concerning example of the place profit has gained in academia. The director of IHEID, Marie-Laure Salles, explained to the Tribune de Geneve that the PhD remuneration at the Institute is the way it is because 90% of the PhD students are foreign and will not stay at the Institute after completing their thesis.

She also highlights that the students get to pick what to write about and who to be their supervisor for their thesis. While this is indeed a good thing, it is not something that sets the IHEID PhD programme significantly apart from any other PhD programme, and certainly not something that justifies underpaying those who are enrolled in it.

With no intent to misunderstand Salles point, I will presume that the emphasis here lies on the fact that the students do not stay at the Institute to work here, rather than on the fact that they are foreign. Otherwise, suggesting that poor labour conditions can be excused on the basis that labour conditions may be even worse where the students come from is a point barely worth engaging with.

What remains, in any case, is the argument that the PhD students cannot be compensated fairly, as it is not a profitable investment for the Institute over time. This represents a concerning trend where the value of knowledge production is incorrectly equated with profit.

On one hand, we have all chosen to take part in this semi-private system the Institute operates within. However, many of us come here for the quality of teaching and the vast opportunities in Geneva, not to see the efforts of ourselves and those around us to learn and produce knowledge turned into simple economic capital.

There are many societal consequences of equating knowledge production with profit-making. This will, by consequence, have the potential economic value to motivate one's choice of research topic. Fundamental research—research conducted to produce knowledge without considering its immediate practical applications—is thus put at risk.

In HEIDI.NEWS, Grégoire Mallard, director of research at IHEID, suggests that the low pay of PhD students at the Institute has to do with an Anglo-American model the programme is based upon. This is not commonly seen in Switzerland, and, as Mallard suggests, may be why the PhD pay at IHEID looks so low out of context.

I, however, do not believe that the Anglo-American model in itself is a sufficient reason to maintain a low level of pay. In fact, country-wide strikes in the United Kingdom's University and College Union show that the Anglo-American system is far from popular elsewhere either.

In other words, the Anglo-American model at the Institute is causing working conditions where university staff are not paid adequately. The Directorate needs to acknowledge that the impact of poor labour conditions on TAs will negatively affect the quality of education the Institute can offer to master's students.

## The Collective Experience of Black Students at IHEID

**Interviews collected by Aurelie Semunovic, President of Black Conversations, 2021-2022 - originally shared May 2, 2022, the full version of this article can be found online**

There are no sure ways to count how many black students are enrolled at IHEID. You can attempt to get a rough estimate by looking at the statistics on citizenship provided by the IHEID website. However, 6% of students being from Africa would not be an accurate number to go by, considering the African diaspora stretches across the world and that the African continent also has non-black people. Founded by Diandra Dillon in 2020, Black Conversations (BC) was "born out of a desire to foster a space where individuals of African descent could be at the forefront of conversations discussing their unique experiences". The following interview represents a part of the lived experiences of active members of Black Conversations at the Geneva Graduate Institute as of the year 2022.

The respondents were initially contacted by WhatsApp through the BC group chat. All interviews were mostly conducted in person and in one-on-one interactions. None of the interviewees were primed, and each one of them was informed that their statements would be published in the IHEID Graduate Press on behalf of Black Conversations. Each interviewee was also given the opportunity to make slight adjustments and edit their responses over a Google Doc over a period of 24-48 hours. This is also where their consent was collected. A total of 10 interview responses were then shared with the Graduate Press for grammatical editing and eventual publishing. Each interview began with the same question but did not necessarily follow a structured script to encourage nuanced responses. Some questions were deliberately basic, while others were more critical. All responses are direct quotes and do not include any paraphrasing, interpretation, or analysis. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. To encourage reproducibility and to contribute to a greater historical context, the content of these interviews will be submitted to the Archive Contestataires, where it will be saved amongst other social movement works in Switzerland.

Finally, I want to convey my deepest gratitude to each of the interviewees for their time, but most importantly, for their courage and candour in expressing themselves. On numerous occasions, I found myself finishing each interview with great emotional weight and desolation. Recording your thoughts and typing your words was a great honor. I am certain these responses will only trigger the most professional and kindest institutional reactions by our peers, administrators, and faculty members. Additionally, by the end of this semester, an annual report on institutional (anti-black) racism with specific incidents will be sent to the appropriate administrators. Thank you to the members of BC for your commitment to continuing this 'conversation'.

**Interviewee: Laila Muhammad Saidu**

**Date and Location: Friday, April 15th, 2022 Grand Morillon (Group Interview)**

**What were your expectations before coming to the school?**

*"I expected to be surrounded by students who are open-minded and willing to learn from others,*

*especially regarding development. Some students are, but I have found that many others are insensitive and close-minded. They expect policies from the Global North to work on the Global South. I believe that's a colonising mindset, and it's scary because a lot of them aspire to work in developing countries. I don't know how that can change. Another thing is that the Institute sells the idea that this school is a sort of community, but actually there's no sense of community except with initiatives like ASA and BC. With regards to racism, the Institute can be very performative because they hold talks and events, but when it comes to structures, there's nothing. You don't even have anyone to report incidents of racism to. I also expected to find black women professors, but it is discouraging when we don't see any teaching. So how can we feel encouraged to work for organisations and be in positions of power as black women? We need more African professors who specialise in the region. We need diversity in the academic staff, as we have diverse students."*

**Why haven't you talked or written about this?**

*"It's hard to talk about this because you don't know how much change you can make in our short time here. These are things we should fight, but we've been here for two years."*

## The Russian Story

**Interview(s) collected by Dario De Quarti - originally shared March 9, 2022, the full version of this article can be found online**

In order to protect the identities of the interviewees, The Graduate Press has decided to keep them anonymous and use plural pronouns.

*"Can we begin with this statement?"*

*"Yes, sure."*

*"On behalf of many Russians, we feel deeply sorry for Ukraine and its citizens. We are extremely frightened and ashamed too. We do not support, in any way, what is currently happening. We neither want to make excuses nor justify ourselves. We simply want to share from the Russian perspective the geopolitical and historical patterns that led to this conflict as well as the consequences for Russia."*

When a war erupts, there are always different sides to the story. They do not contradict each other but rather complement our understanding of the escalation. It is nearly impossible to understand a conflict without listening to the side of the country that has been labelled "the aggressor", even if it can be painful to do so. In order to provide our readers with a broader understanding of the current Russian attack on Ukraine, we interviewed some of the young Russians living in Europe. Because of several laws in place that could put their lives in danger, we have chosen to limit sharing any information that could be used to identify our interviewees, and they remain anonymous in this article.

"The first thing which needs to be understood is that there is a generational gap between youth and elders.

*.The older generations are still traumatised by the fall of the Soviet Union, when they lost everything. This traumatic experience was never psychologically processed. Russia is extremely difficult to understand, and one big problem is that the West uses their European perception to describe Russia, which is not accurate. Overall, no Russian supports the idea of what is happening right now. But the older generations understand better why we came to this point, maybe."*

*An unexpected war?*

For me, a European student living in the innocence of my Western media sources, this attack on Ukraine felt somehow unexpected. "For Russians, it was very expected. Ukraine is a very sensitive topic. Many Russians have Ukrainian roots, relatives, or friends. There was a narrative used by the Kremlin propaganda that Ukrainians were discriminating [against] Russians, which found a lot of support among Russian society and is extremely painful".

Along these lines, one interviewee argued: "There were some nationalistic movements emerging in Ukraine. For example, the parades of May 9th, which are very important in post-Soviet countries, were forbidden. Streets were renamed, from a war hero to a Ukrainian person. But once again, we are really sorry for and to Ukrainians. They are the ones suffering right now, we understand this. We are culturally really closely linked countries. We still think that Russian and Ukrainian are brothers, we always call each other like this, together with Belarus, before 2014 at least."

Another interviewee added, "It is just so upsetting that before 2014 we all (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarus) were tightly linked throughout history and no one questioned that within those countries and no one condemned that. Then there was a shift happening in Ukraine and suddenly we feel like our joint history has been rewritten. And it does get portrayed in this rewritten way in Western media as well. Although it is undeniable that our countries have been linked throughout centuries very closely."

Other interviewees saw the main root of the conflict elsewhere.

*"In fact there is a broader geopolitical story that has to do with two entities: the European Union and NATO".*

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Can we conclude with another statement?"*

*"Yes, sure."*

*"We feel a mix of shame, helplessness, guilt and despair. One of the worst sanctions for us is not economic, it is moral. Coming from a country which is an aggressor is hard, because we will of course not get any understanding, or will to understand. There is also a lot of Russophobia coming now, especially in Europe. [...] And again, from the Ukrainian side we understand it, no questions asked, it is more the Europeans who worry us. None of us wanted this to happen. We want peace for our Slavic brothers."*

*"You never actually expect a war to happen. It was still hard to believe. From a very young age, Russian schools teach you what happened during World War II, and how it should not happen again. And then your government does the same thing you were told not to let happen.[...]"*

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